



LIBRARY OF HEAVEN'S PATH

C1031: Entering the Lava



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"Shut up!" Zhang Xuan's eyebrows shot up.

"Roger that!" Hearing the bellow from its master, the Golden Origin Cauldron immediately fell silent, not daring to say another word.

Even though it had halted its words halfway through, the content that it had revealed thus far was more than enough for the others to make sense of the situation. Their gazes couldn't help but drift to Zhang Xuan.

"Took in an apprentice as his blacksmith student on a whim?"

"Reforge the Golden Origin Cauldron? Principal Zhang, what is going on?"

As a Saint low-tier artifact, it would at least take the strength of a 7-star blacksmith to reforge it and raise its grade. Yet, an apprentice that he had taken in as his blacksmith student on a whim had actually reforged it? What was going on?

A blacksmith apprentice... was someone who hadn't even passed the 1-star blacksmith examination yet, right? How could such a person help to reforge a Saint low-tier artifact?

"Last night, I met an apprentice who was trying to end his life..." Noting everyone's gaze on him, Zhang Xuan began explaining the matter that had happened the previous night. It was no secret anyway, so there was no need for him to hide it.

"An apprentice who couldn't even smith a Mortal-tier weapon was actually able to upgrade the Golden Origin Cauldron with just an hour of guidance from you?"

"T-this... Surely that is impossible." Hearing the story, the crowd felt incredibly frenzied.

To actually guide an apprentice in reforging his Saint low-tier artifact... Just how confident did one have to be to dare do such a thing?

Just how deep of an understanding of smithing did one have to command to be capable of pulling off such a feat?

"I have long heard that Principal Zhang possesses incredible smithing mastery, but this... it seems like I have still been underestimating him."

"Indeed. Just by this feat alone, it can be seen that his grasp over smithing is on par with 7-star pinnacle blacksmiths."

"How can we ever expect to match up with that?"

The principals of the other three Master Teacher Academies couldn't help but sigh bitterly at this point.

They had learned from Zhao Bingxu's words that the young man before them possessed an astounding mastery of smithing. All along, they had thought that 6-star pinnacle would be the cap, especially considering the other party's young age. However, upon hearing this, they realized that they had been taking Zhang Xuan too lightly.

One must know that even a real 7-star pinnacle blacksmith couldn't possibly guide an apprentice into successfully reforging a Saint low-tier artifact!

Different from what the others were focused on, Luo Ruoxin looked at the young man before her with widened eyes and asked, "You... After parting from me, you saved a person and tore away the hypocritical mask of an elder of the Blacksmith Guild?"

Zhang Xuan nodded. "Un. I was intending to follow you after you left, but it was then that I saw someone attempting to end his life. It was due to this incident that I eventually came late!"

"I see..." Luo Ruoxin shook her head helplessly.

She had thought that the other party was pig-headed when he didn't pursue her the previous night, and she had even flown into a rage over it. However, it seemed like she

had misunderstood the other party.

As a master teacher, protecting the sanctity and dignity of teaching was clearly more important than one's own personal matters.

Nevertheless, despite knowing that he had been misunderstood, he didn't use this matter as an excuse to justify himself. Had it not been for the Golden Origin Cauldron bragging about the matter, she would probably have remained ignorant of it. His character was truly worthy of respect.

Not dwelling on the matter, Zhang Xuan turned to the crowd and explained, "I am guessing that the ancient domain might be located at the crux of where the energy is being released from in the lava. Thus, I intend to head in to take a look."

"The crux of where the energy is being released from?"

The crowd frowned.

"Considering the rampaging energies that are bound to be at the crux, even if there is a formation or folded space there, it would have been destroyed long ago. How could the ancient domain possibly be constructed there?" Guild Leader Han remarked.

He had taken that point into his analysis as well, and it was also the first possibility that he had eliminated.

The energies that had accumulated in the lava were so great that should an explosion occur, everything within a radius of a thousand kilometers would be reduced to ashes. Under the constant assault of such a powerful force, even the stablest of folded spaces or formations would have been destroyed long ago!

"I can't deny that, but the very energy that could be used to destroy the formation could also be used to sustain it! There are strengths and weaknesses to it, and with our limited understanding of formations, there is no way we can make a conclusive judgement on the matter. The only way to find out is to head down ourselves," Zhang Xuan replied with a wave of his hand.

"This..." Guild Leader Han's mouth opened to refute Zhang Xuan's words, but to his surprise, he found that the other party's words were logical as well.

As the saying goes, 'water can float a boat or sink it'. A powerful might could destroy the formation, but if a formation master could tap into it well, it could also become a powerful source of energy that further reinforced the might of the formation.

Of course, that would be a matter for higher ranked formation masters to frustrate over. With their current level of proficiency, it was still too far away for them.

"Alright, I will be going in to take a look!"

After explaining the matter, Zhang Xuan beckoned the Golden Origin Cauldron over and leaped into its body.

With the massive size of the Golden Origin Cauldron, it could easily house three to four people in it without trouble. Thus, Zhang Xuan could hide within it while exploring the depths of the lava.

Zhang Xuan did consider sending the Golden Origin Cauldron alone—that would have been much safer for him—but considering the unreliable nature of the cauldron, it was questionable whether it would be able to provide him with any useful information or not. Thus, he decided to make the trip down personally.

Seeing Zhang Xuan leap into the cauldron, Luo Ruoxin couldn't help but exclaim worriedly, "Be careful!"

"Un." Zhang Xuan flashed Luo Ruoxin a smile before fully entering the Golden Origin Cauldron.

"Here I go!" With an excited exclamation, the Golden Origin Cauldron began charging toward the area where the energies in the lava were originating from.

The previous blast of energy had just occurred a moment ago, and judging from the past occurrences, there would be a ten minutes interval before the next one. He could make use of this interval to dive in. Otherwise, if they were caught in the explosion, it was questionable if the Golden Origin Cauldron would be able to take the impact.

Gugugugu!

As soon as the massive cauldron descended into the lava, bubbles began popping up at the surface. Seated within the cauldron, Zhang Xuan felt heat assaulting him from all directions.

The Golden Origin Cauldron was a weapon cauldron, specially forged to retain heat so that it could melt even the most durable of metals. Given so, it was inevitable that heat would seep into the cauldron from the surroundings. While Zhang Xuan wouldn't come into direct contact with the lava by hiding within the Golden Origin Cauldron, given the sealed environment that he was in, the heat he would have to endure was nowhere beneath the heat outside.

Zhang Xuan began driving his Heaven's Path zhenqi, and the heat assaulting him alleviated significantly. A moment later, he stood up and said, "Ding Ding, stop!"

"Here?" The Golden Origin Cauldron was taken aback.

They had barely entered the lava, not having even ventured ten meters deep. To stop at this point... why?

"Un." Zhang Xuan nodded. "There is no need to go too deep... Wait here for me!"

After saying those words, Zhang Xuan drew out his soul from his glabella and slipped into the lava.

While the Golden Origin Cauldron had raised its cultivation significantly, its limit was unlikely to be much more than forty meters. Furthermore, it was also doubtful if he would be able to tolerate the heat while hiding within the Golden Origin Cauldron if they were to venture too deep. In truth, the reason he had gotten the Golden Origin Cauldron to enter the lava with him was to protect his physical body.

His true goal was to venture in the lava with his soul!

Due to the intangible nature of souls, while his soul would still be affected by the immense heat of the lava, the extent to which he was affected was significantly lower as compared to that of his physical body. Furthermore, he could also move freely around the area without being affected by the crushing pressure of the lava, allowing him to dive deeper and possibly uncover more secrets.

Indeed, it is as I expected! By entering the lava, not only is my soul undamaged by the heat, I can even absorb the surrounding energy to strengthen it! Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

As his soul was cultivated through the Heaven's Path Soul Art, he didn't suffer from Searing Yang Decline like other souls would, making him near impervious to heat. Had it been any other soul oracle, putting aside entering the lava, their soul would have already dissipated into nothingness just from the heat inside the cauldron!

This heat is ideal for refining weapons and ridding the impurities within. Could it be used to temper my soul too?

While a soul was intangible, just like Primordial Spirits, they were very much existent in this world. Since this heat could refine weapons, perhaps it could refine a soul as well?

I should give it a try.

Thus, leaving his soul floating freely in the lava, he began absorbing the heat from the surroundings slowly.

Tzzzzzzz!

A searing surge of energy began gushing into Zhang Xuan's soul. Under the tempering of the intense heat, his soul began to growing stronger and stronger. Just like he had imagined, the impurities contained within his soul was also being expelled continuously.

As I expected, it works!

He had been thinking that his soul was a little too bloated all along, making it a little troublesome for him to squeeze into his body. He had been wanting to refine it for a while now, but he hadn't been able to find a way to do so. The immense heat within the lava happened to be an ideal opportunity for him to do so.

However, this isn't the time for me to cultivate yet. While my soul might be unaffected by the burst of energies that occur once every ten minutes, the same cannot be said about the Golden Origin Cauldron. There is a chance that it could be blasted away by the sheer might of it, and that will pose significant trouble to me.

Even though Zhang Xuan wanted to cultivate and temper his soul, he knew that this wasn't the right time for him to do so. Thus, he stopped what he was doing and began diving further into the lava.

The most important thing for him to do at the moment was find the entrance to the ancient domain. As for cultivation, he would have plenty of opportunities to do so later on.

Just as Wu shi had said, the temperature grew higher and higher the further he ventured downward. Every ten meters he descended, the heat in the surroundings intensified significantly.

According to my calculations, the limit for Saint 1-dan cultivators is ten meters, the limit for Saint 2-dan cultivators is twenty meters, so on and so forth. As a Saint 4-dan expert, the limit for Wu shi is forty meters. Anything further is beyond his scope of abilities!

Zhang Xuan's soul ventured downward swiftly. In just a few breaths, he had already reached the forty-meter mark. Upon sensing the change in the temperature at this boundary, he came up with a deduction.

The forty-meter mark sure is warm. Even in my soul state, it is still a little hard to bear.

The previous thirty meters had not posed much of a threat to his soul, but as soon as he reached the forty-meter mark, the heat around him suddenly intensified greatly. The relentless assault of blazing heat was difficult for even his soul to withstand.

Continue on!

Driving his Heaven's Path Soul Art to alleviate the heat, Zhang Xuan broke the forty-meter mark and continued diving deeper.

As soon as he treaded beyond the forty-meter mark, he suddenly felt as if he had been thrown into a pot of oil. Despite the superior durability of his soul, it still began distorting out of shape under the assault of the overwhelming heat, seemingly ready to dissipate very soon.

Zhang Xuan's face darkened. This isn't working. This is a region that only Leaving Aperture realm experts are able to enter. Even in my soul form, I am already at my limit.

He had been thinking of venturing deeper in the lava by utilizing the inherent advantage of his soul's resistance to heat. However, from the looks of it, it seemed like he had underestimated how hot the lava was.

Considering how even a Saint 4-dan Primordial Spirit realm master teacher had nearly succumbed at the forty-meter mark, it was already rather incredible that his Transcendent Mortal 9-dan soul could come this far as well.

Enduring the pain, Zhang Xuan tried to trudge on forcefully, but upon crossing the fifty-meter mark, he felt that his soul was starting to dissipate. He was at his limit.

An increase in temperature signified an increase in the activity of a material at its fundamental level, thus making its existing structure unstable. This was similar to how solid weapons melted into metallic fluids under intense heat.

Souls couldn't exactly be considered a material, but when the temperature grew too high, even space itself would become unstable, let alone a mere soul.

Alarmed, Zhang Xuan hurriedly retreated back to the fifty-meter mark, and only then did he finally feel the dissipation of his soul stopping. At this point, he couldn't help but frown in distress.

I have already reached the fifty-meter mark, but the ancient domain is still nowhere to be seen. Could it be that my deduction is wrong and it is not located here?

He had come this far, but there was nothing to be seen. The only thing that was notable was the progressively increasing temperature. Just as Wo Tianqiong had said earlier, he was probably coming close to the Earth Core Lava.

At a place as warm as that, even formation flags would melt and folded spaces would collapse. Could he really have been wrong?

While Zhang Xuan was in the midst of contemplating, a rumbling suddenly echoed from beneath like a huge machine coming into life.

With narrowed eyes, Zhang Xuan saw an immense energy blasting straight in his direction.

Sugar! Why did the energies burst prematurely this time around? This is bad, really bad...

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